

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

Vol. 24, No. 11

November 15, 1956

Whole No. 290

Rootin' Tootin' Shootin' Frisco Bert

by Charlie Duprez

Far out in the Golden West, with its sunshine—and smog, there happily resides one of our Brotherhood, known by all the Roundup readers due to various Reckless Ralph's Nosy News items. Bertrand M. Couch, member No. 21.

As California where he revels amidst his fishing tackle, enjoying an easy existence is quite a distance from here, will take a chance and see if I can mess around with a bit of his biography.

Quite a few letters have reached me, the last one only twelve pages, neatly typed on both sides. Truly a man of very few words, and quite outspoken—by his wife.

One thing that intrigued me was his unusual high regard paid to his wife, two solid pages, from which I gather she is the kind of a wife I did not know existed. I do know there are some wonderful wives around, but SO wonderful, wal Ah swan.

For some unknown reason he was born July 13th, 1889, in Brenham, Washington County, Texas, a sad day for evil doers in later years when he served as a F. B. I. Agent. The latter came in very handy when several Brothers tried to do him dirt in novel transactions, one landing nicely in the pokey. This bit of information is passed on, just in case.

Ralph mentioned about his travels taking in Mexico, to the wilds of Guatemala (Roundup No. 258) gone 3½ months. From Bert's letters I find he has been into every state in



Frisco Bert Couch

the Union plus his travels abroad which took in many countries like France, Germany, England, etc. All this with his wife after his retirement from Government Service. That boy sure gets around.

One fine article he wrote which gives an insight into what kind of a hot number he really is, see Roundup No. 251, Aug. 1953.

Prior to Government activities he was a Western Union Messenger Boy, Stock Exchange Messenger, cigar store clerk which was the kind of a job he found very helpful, being a

cigar smoker, all he had to do was reach for one—when the boss wasn't looking. Every time I used to reach for one, somebody stepped on my fingers. Bert gave me a list of jobs he did, space just won't permit giving you brothers all of them. So briefly, Southern Pacific File Clerk, butcher and meat cutter in his Dad's shop, cowhand on his Dad's ranch, soon after to College to graduate in Banking and Counting, Bank Teller—oh boy would I like that job, fondling all that nice green and yellow cabbage. I forget what the stuff looked like. Not our Bert however, he was smart enough to stick some of it away in case it ever rained in California. Either that or he has an in at Ft. Knox.

Off to see the sea as Asst. Purser and Super Cargo on ships, Customs Inspector, Immigration Inspector, well fellers I'd only get you dizzy if I were to mention all of his activities. It did me.

It was in Albany N. Y. he met and married his wonderful wife, June 7th, 1924. Claims in all his married life they had only one battle, he coming out second best, and tranquility hath endured ever since. Well I can equal that, I only had one battle in my forty-four years of marriage, it started the day after we married and it hasn't ended yet. So what has he to brag about?

At present his hardest job is get-

ting up at break of dawn, climbing 1½ miles up to a lake and fish, catching so many at the end of the season he has enough stored away to supply the entire state of California. I am firmly convinced that all he tells me is gospel, but when it comes to fish, the average fisherman is inclined to stretch it a bit. I find it much easier to just open a can of sardines.

Well all in all fellow members I am quite convinced Frisco Bert is a swell guy and we should all be proud he is one of our members.

EXCHANGE COLUMN

For Sale, 80 Buffalo Bill Border Stories, Far West Libraries, mostly without covers, \$16.00. P. J. Moran, 2040 Almond Ave., Concord, Calif.

Wanted: Pluck and Luck #89 119 124 127 197 206 221 256, Secret Service #1 2 12 13 15 21 25 29 33 36 37 137. Tip Top #2 14 18 282. George French, 7 Leo Terrace, Bloomfield, N. J.

WANTED

Pamphlets on crime before 1880 such as those published by Barclay & Co., Philadelphia. Also interesting early Broadrides on poetry, advertising, etc. Please describe condition carefully.

Benjamin Tighe

1755 Main St. Athol 1, Mass.

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Published Monthly at

821 Vermont Street, Lawrence, Kansas

Edited by

Edward T. LeBlanc, 87 School St., Fall River, Mass.

Entered as second-class matter at the post office at Lawrence, Kansas

Price \$2.00 per year

Assistant Editor

Ralph F. Cummings, Fisherville, Mass.

Asst. Ed. Photography—Charles Duprez, 228 Larch Lane, Smithtown, L.I., N.Y.

Ad Rates — 6c per word. \$1.00 per inch, quarter page \$2.25, half page \$3.00 and Full Page \$5.00. — 4 times for the price of three.

Ads should be submitted by the 15th of the month in order to assure publication in the following month's issue.

Outlaw Trails In Indian Territory

By J. Edward Leithead

(continued from last issue)

Let me quote here from a Dalton Boys story by St. George Rathborne—Log Cabin Library #267, Side-tracking a Pay Train, or, The Daltons' Raid for Big Booty (the outlaws are being sternly pursued by a posse, their horses are giving out and Grattan Dalton, as a village looms before them, separates himself from the rest to get fresh horses and catch up to them on the road. Entering the town, Grattan runs into a bunch of armed horsemen. They take him for what he is, one of the Dalton Gang, and Gratt, who has hitched his horse, finds himself cornered):

"Behind him was a store. He rushed in, revolvers in both hands. "Clear the way!" he yelled to the people inside.

"The way was instantly cleared, for the people fled in all directions. Gratt dashed through the store and out a rear door.

"Directly at the back of the store, not more than fifty feet distant, was a railroad water-tank. Gratt rushed toward this and up a ladder leaning against the side of it.

"On the top of the tank there was a sliding door. He was just pulling this trap-door open, when he heard a voice below him, proceeding from the engine-house, where the pumping engine was located that filled the tank.

"Hey! Git down from there!"

"The engineer stood in the door of the house and shook his fist at the outlaw. Quick as a flash, Gratt drew his revolver. Crack! The man in the engine-house dropped dead in his tracks . . .

"The mounted men who had first undertaken the pursuit of Gratt, were obliged to dismount and secure their horses before they could follow him through the store. Consequently, the only man who saw Gratt on top of the water-tank was dead and unable to direct the pursuers.

"The outlaw had dropped into the

tank and closed the sliding door before his pursuers came within sight. The tank was full of water, and Gratt found it necessary to do considerable swimming in order to keep his head above the surface.

"When his eyes became accustomed to the darkness, however, he discovered an iron chain pendant from the roof and running along the sides of the tank, and he supported himself with this. When he was able to examine his surroundings more minutely, he found that there were a half dozen holes, three or four inches in diameter, bored under the eaves of the tank, in different places.

"These were evidently 'overflow holes', to let out the water in case the tank should inadvertently become too full. Peeping through one of these holes, he saw the armed men below him, looking at the dead body of the engineer."

They are sure Gratt killed the man, but can't see the outlaw anywhere, not suspecting he's concealed in the water-tank. A man named Pete is sent to bring the horses from in front of the store and the others scatter out in search of Dalton.

"That's right, Pete," muttered Gratt to himself, with a chuckle; "hitch the horses right to the tank, and if I don't get away with half a dozen of 'em, I'll miss my guess."

"In a few moments Pete returned, hitched the horses to the tank, and sat down directly under the big iron spout that carried the water out.

"By thunder," muttered Gratt, "I've got an idea!"

"Softly swimming back to the sliding door, the outlaw opened it, and got out upon the water-tank. Then he crept around until he reached a section of the roof directly over the spout and the spot where Pete was sitting.

"Right under Gratt was the chain that operated the valve. Reaching down, he caught it and gave it a long, steady pull. Instantly a flood of water

escaped through the pipe and poured down upon the man below.

"No sooner had Gratt released this torrent, than he lowered himself, hand over hand, down the chain that worked the valve, and, by dropping a few feet, was soon on the ground.

"Pete, gasping, sputtering and half-drowned, was pawing the air wildly. The outlaw struck him on the head and dropped him in his tracks. Then he turned his attention to the horses.

"Selecting six, and releasing the others, he sprang into the saddle of one, caught the bridle in his teeth, and led three horses with his right and two with his left hand. Then he dashed away.

"There he goes!" sang out someone behind him.

"Take after him—run him down!" yelled somebody else.

"The outlaw did not stop to see how many pursuers were coming along his trail, but dashing along a narrow alley, soon emerged upon the main street of the town."

There were two stories relating to the Daltons in Street & Smith's Nick Carter Library: #67, *The Dalton Gang Wiped Out*, or, *Nick Carter's Deadly Rifle* (Nick must have been present when the Daltons tried their double bank robbery at Coffeyville) and #109, *Nick Carter After Bob Dalton*, or, *Tracking the Greatest Outlaw Since Jesse James* (this was reprinted as #125 of *Nick Carter Weekly* with title changed). A couple of others in the library were about another famous outlaw band—the Cook Gang, headed by Bill Cook, were train robbers of Oklahoma, 1894-95: #174, *Nick Carter After the Cook Gang*, or, *The Hold-Up of the Kansas City & Memphis Express*, and #181, *The Cook Gang at Blackstone Switch*, or, *The Hold-Up of the "Katy" Express*.

In Nick Carter Library was a series of three, #116, *The Train Robbery at Kessler Switch*, #117, *Nick Carter on Time* and #118, *The Train Robbers' Wind-Up* (at least two of these were reprinted in *Nick Carter Weekly* with titles changed), but they were about fictitious outlaws. In fact, all

through the Nick Carter Library and *Weekly* you will find tales of Western outlaws, but I'm listing at this time only those about bandit gangs that really existed.

Among the paperback books about the Daltons were the Westbrook Company's Adventure Series #7, *The Dalton Gang, the Bandits of the Far West*, a biography by William Ward, *The Oklahoma Bandits, the Daltons*, by Clarence E. Ray (Regan Pub. Corp.), *The Dalton Brothers*, by Harry Hawkeye, pseudonym of Paul Emilius Lowe (I. and M. Ottenheimer, Publishers) and *The Dalton Brothers and Their Astounding Career of Crime*, by an Eye Witness (Laird & Lee)—the last named, published as a paperback book in 1892 by Laird & Lee, of Chicago, was reprinted in 1954 in a hard-cover edition, with an introduction by Burton Rascoe, by Frederick Fell, Inc., Publishers, New York.

Leader of the Starr Gang was Henry or "Hank" Starr, who had a surprisingly long career outside the law. It was not because the law failed to lay hands on him, either (as was the case, for instance, with the James Boys). Starr was in and out of jail numerous times—once was nearly hung by sentence of the Federal judge, Isaac C. Parker, famed as the "Hanging Judge" of Fort Smith, Arkansas. Yet, in the end, it may have been the long memory of the law for an old offense which broke up Starr's attempt at reformation. Hard to say. Starr, who married during his outlaw days, had a young son and seems to have been torn between fondness for the boy, a desire to be the kind of father a son could be proud of, and an insatiable liking for the hazards of banditry.

There was Cherokee and white blood in Henry Starr; he staged his first holdup in early youth and killed the lawman who trailed him down. When he really hit his stride, he made the name of the Starr gang hated and feared in Oklahoma and elsewhere. Their operations included banks and trains, particularly the latter. Despite the long series of robberies credited

to him (and although he was a dead-shot with .45 or Winchester), it is said that he was no kill-crazy death dealer. That he was dangerous, doubly so because his Indian blood gave him superiority in craft over most white men, whether lone wolfing it or heading his gang, those who came in contact with him were very ready to concede.

The bank at Bentonville, Arkansas, was one of the first to yield booty to the Starr gang. It was a smoky affair. Like the Dalton Boys, the Starr gang tried to pull a double bank robbery at Stroud, Oklahoma. They were more successful than the Daltons—Henry Starr's saddlemates rode clear with the loot, but Starr himself was brought low by a bullet and captured. He would have been strung up by infuriated citizens had not the noted peace officer, Bill Tilghman, intervened.

The law in Arkansas never forgot the Bentonville holdup, and presumably it was this that kept Starr on the dodge, robbing wherever he happened to be. He did time in the Colorado state prison for a bank job at which he was taken. It was back in Arkansas, long afterward, that he got his come-uppance, drilled by the cashier of the bank at Harrison as he was sticking it up.

St. George Rathborne, under the pen name "Jim Kearney", wrote a series of Henry Starr stories for Street & Smith's Log Cabin Library, the titles of which I list here:

- #221—Hank Starr, the Dalton Gang's Dead-Shot; or, Marshal Ruggles' Round-Up. (Although it makes a good story, I can't find any record that Henry Starr ever joined the Dalton Boys).
- #231—Hank Starr at Pryor Creek, or, Old Jack Drew Heard From.
- #238—Hank Starr in Colorado, or, Bailey Bancroft's Big Scheme.
- #248—Hank Starr's Rival, or, The Dashing Belle of Oklahoma. (If this story is about Belle Starr—born Myra Belle Shirley—it's the only one I know of between paper covers besides the book issued by

Richard K. Fox, National Police Gazette publisher, entitled, *Bella Starr, the Bandit Queen, or, The Female Jesse James*. The Police Gazette, dated July 24, 1886, carried a picture on the back cover of Belle and a male companion on horseback, possibly her husband, Sam Starr, though the caption does not so state: "The Real Thing. How Belle Starr, the Amazon queen of Arkansas, actually looks and acts on her native heath. From a photograph taken expressly for this paper." Belle, in riding habit, broad-brimmed hat turned up at the side, revolver on hip and quirt hanging from her wrist, looks quite handsome as the outlaw queen. Evidently taken on the street of a small town, in front of a store, with a wooden dwelling nearby with outside stairway and enclosed by a picket fence. Sam Starr was a cousin of Henry Starr.

- #249—Hank Starr in Wyoming, or, The Clean-Up at "Whoop Up" Camp.
- #250—Hank Starr in Missouri, or, The Outlaws' Deadly Feud.
- #256—Hank Starr in New England, or, The Hard Fate of Nervy Nancy Neary.
- #259—Hank Starr in Nebraska, or, Looting the Treasure on the Dis-mal River.
- #262—The Hold-Up in the Snow, or, Hank Starr's Startling Ride at White Bird's Gulch.
- #264—Hank Starr in Idaho, or, Chris Evans and Morrell to the Rescue.
- #266—The Moonshiners of Mt. Welcome, or, Hank Starr and the Kentucky Outlaws.
- #268—Hank Starr's Tall Hustle, or, Hide and Seek in City and Hills.
- #271—Hank Starr's Closest Call, or, Outwitting Toner, the Western Trailer.

One other Henry Starr item is #19 of the Bob Brooks Library, *Chasing the Starr Gang of Bank and Train Robbers*, no author given.

The End.

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

- 107 John H. Foster, 1202 West Howard Ave., Dade City, Fla. (New address)
- 208 James E. Knott, Crocker House, New London, Conn. (Old member)
- 209 Leo W. Lorenzo, 929 N. 12th St., Reading, Pa. (New member)
- 56 G. D. Nichols, 431 Alberton Ave., Covina, Calif. (New address)
- 210 Jack Conroy, 6012 South Green St., Chicago 21, Ill. (New member)
- 211 Daniel O'Herlihy, 17220 Gresham St., Northridge, Calif. (New member)
- 23 Edward T. LeBlanc, 87 School St., Fall River, Mass. (New address)
- 212 New York State Library, Serials Section No. 3, Albany 1, N. Y. (New)

NEWSY NEWS

by Ralph F. Cummings

Tony London of Frank Merriwell Enterprises reports further that he has just concluded arrangement to do "The Life and Loves of Frank Merriwell" or "True Blue" on Broadway for the 1957 show season. That should be worth a trip to New York to see. Could even get a real large group of members to go en masse and root for good old Frank. Mr. London also mentioned in his letter that the comic magazine "Frank Merriwell at Yale" ceased with #4. The Charlton Co. was the victim of two devastating floods in Derby, Conn., during which, among other things, they lost their entire inventory of newsprint and because replacement was at a considerably higher price and because our comic book was the last new one they had taken, they elected to suspend publication for the time being. He also mentioned that only one TV film was produced which has not been shown on TV. He hopes to interest a sponsor and produce others for a TV film series. Anyone know of a sponsor?

Our new member, Jack Conroy, of Chicago, Ill., says he has had a bout with the flu and other ailments. Says he found the Roundup very interesting, particularly the information on his old friend Upton Sinclair during his dime novel writing days—he says he is sure to enjoy each issue.

Ralph P. Smith reported the death of Arvid Dahlstedt of Great Barrington, Mass., who he says died over a year ago, as I haven't heard from him in so long, I wondered what was wrong. Arvid was in his 80's.

Ralph P. Smith, Edward T. LeBlanc and Dennis Rogers of Montreal

Canada were here with me on Sunday afternoon, October 7th. We sure had a time of it, talking over dime novels etc., while Denis was looking for his Ellis wants.

Oct. 15th Don L. Steinhauer of Philadelphia and Eli Messier of Woonsocket, R. I., were here—seems funny, Eli and myself were speaking of Don, when in he comes, sure was surprised, and very glad to see him too.

Charlie Duprez says he's been feeling pretty rotten lately, so fellers, try and cheer him up for he needs it. 228 Larch Lane, Smithtown, L. I., N. Y. will do the trick.

Charles Bragin wishes No. 1 of Nick Carter Library, will buy or trade for it, or will be very careful of it if he could get the loan of it.

Aubrey W. Egerton has moved to 407 East 9th Ave., Houston 7, Texas. He wishes any old magazines and newspapers with pictures of old automobile ads in them. Aubrey has been sick, but is much better now, of which we are all very glad to hear. Says he will answer all letters sent him in good time, if they will be patient a little longer.

Albert E. Johnson of Sacramento, Calif., writes that there is a fine article on "Old Grizzly Adams," entitled "Damnedest Bear Hunter of Them All," by Harold McCracken and Gene Ceasar. Al says that fly spot is still in his eye yet, and he can't get rid of it. (Does any one have any dope on how he can get rid of it? Ed.)

The "Sunday Pictorial Review" section of the Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph for Sept. 23rd, 1956, has a fine article on "Dime Novel Days, When Boys Were Supermen." By E. V. Dur-

ling, and sent to me by Bob Troetschel. One page affair. Has picture of the Steam Man chasing the Indians. In the article it mentions Frank Merriwell, Frank Reade, Old King Brady, Nick Carter, Fred Fearnot and The Steam Man.

Statement required by the Act of August 24, 1912 as amended by the Acts of Mar. 3, 1933 and July 2, 1946 (Title 39, United States Code, Section 233) Showing the Ownership, Management and Circulation of

Dime Novel Round-Up

published monthly at Lawrence, Kans. for September 1956.

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are:

Publisher Edward T. LeBlanc, 36 Taylor St., Fall River, Mass.

Editor, Edward T. LeBlanc, same Managing Ed., Edw. T. LeBlanc, same Business Mgr., Edw. T. LeBlanc, same

2. That the owner is: (If owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately thereunder the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding one

per cent or more of total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given. If owned by a firm, company, or other unincorporated concern, its name and address, as well as those of each individual member, must be given.)

Edward T. LeBlanc, 36 Taylor St., Fall River, Mass.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: (If there are none, so state.)

None
Signed

Edward T. LeBlanc
Owner

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 24th day of September, 1956.

(Seal) C. H. Camille Whitehead
(My commission expires May 12, 1962)

WANTED

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Will Buy or Exchange.

Have hundreds to Exchange.

D. O'HERLIHY

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LITTLE NOVEL PAPERS FOR SALE

Cummings & Clarke's Flyer, Vol. 2 No. 4 (1924 up) Reckless Ralph, the Dime Novel King, 5. Wanted. A Prize Poem, by Tom Kelly, 6. Dime Novel Days, by George Sahr, 7. Memories of the Days Gone By, by James C. Morris, 8. Boyhood Heroes, by Bob Smeltzer, 9. Fond Memories, by James C. Morris, 10. To My Friend Kelly, by J. C. Morris, 11. Dime Novel Days in Massachusetts, by Ralph F. Cummings, 12. The Good Old Days, by Robt. M. Rowan. Vol. 3 No. 2. The Old Book Store, by Geo. Sahr, 3. A Retrospection, Dedicated to the Authors of the Dear Old Dime Novels of Boyhood Days, by P. C. Maroske, 4. Here's to Dime Novels, by Albert E. Farmer, 5. An Education by Themselves, by Ralph P. Smith.

The Book Hunter. No. 1. Sept. 1925—The Old Time Novel. By John Ferguson. The Novel Hunter, No. 2. The Boy and the Dime Novel, by Ralph Adimari. 3. A Masterpiece by Tom Kelly. 4. The Best and Where to get 'em, by Pearl A. Knece. Vol. 2 No. 1. It Only Cost a Dime, by Pearl A. Knece. 2. Famous "Diamond Dick" and Custer's Last Fight. By Diamond Dick Richard Tanner. 3. Wonderful Novel Land, by Ralph F. Cummings. 4. German Jesse James, Cornered, Kills Self. Vol. 4, No. 1. Just Heroes, by P. A. Knece.

The Novel World 1932 up. 1. Kid Smeltzers Novels, by Edward J. Smeltzer. 2. Fred Fearnots Double Victory, by Ralph M. Sisk. 3. Jerry's Back Room, by ? 4. Collecting Sets in Beadles Dime Library, by Wm. M. Burns. 5. The Great Nick Carter, by Frank T. Fries. 6. A Rare Set in Beadles Popular Library, by Reckless Ralph Cummings.

The Novelette. No. 1. Dime Novels Are Still Here, by Robt. A. Smeltzer. 2. The History of the Dime Novel, by Edwin Brooks.

Price 10c each or 12 for \$1.00.

Ralph F. Cummings

Fisherville, Mass.

BOUND VOLUMES

BEADLE'S DIME LIBRARY

- #18 1078 1028 279 1048 737 243 401 52 621 657 584 1073 1019 \$20.00 Fine.
 #74 629 1056 254 1061 658 1052 1062 1067 1074 1079 1081 159 1050. \$20.00 Fine
 #1068 685 969 906 854 850 376 913 265 124 1015. \$17.50 Fine.
 #393 1076 1070 1030 524 446 1059 104 530 581 587 1075 1049 1053. \$20.00 Fine
 #967 602 676 669 571 641 946 953 930 933 968 183. \$20.00 Fine.
 #999 782 940 427 638 923 423 926 976 776 370 914. Slightly shaken. #782 fair,
 others fine. \$17.50.
 #970 583 118 314 428 846 919 811 889 866 316 878. \$17.50 Fine

OTHER VOLUMES

- Boys of England #26 to 52. Card covers. \$4.00
 #158 to 193 bound in with Wide Awake Library #15 28 129 166 167 192
 193 223 224 386 396. Fine. \$20.00
 #316 to 342 (#316 very poor) Average. \$3.00
 Boys of the World (English). 1870, Volumes 1 and 2 (#1 to 52), \$7.50

MISCELLANEOUS

- Old illustrated weeklies. Any five for \$1.00—Graphic Ballou's Pictorial, Gleason's Pictorial, Harper's Weekly, Every Saturday, Saturday Globe, Illustrated Weekly, Fact and Fancy, Illustrated World, Chimney Corner, Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper.
 St. Nicholas Magazine. Big illustrated old timer, with amateur art, poetry, puzzles and other departments. 2 different, \$1.00.
 The Dickensian. Lovers of Dickens write about various characters and plots, and try to identify places and people. A quarterly magazine of great interest. 2 different, 50c.
 Beadle's Dime Library. \$1.50 for one copy. \$1.00 for a fair one.

Postpaid. Subject to prior sale.

RALPH P. SMITH

Box 985

Lawrence, Mass.